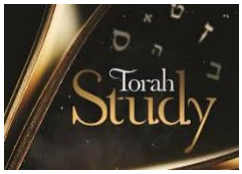
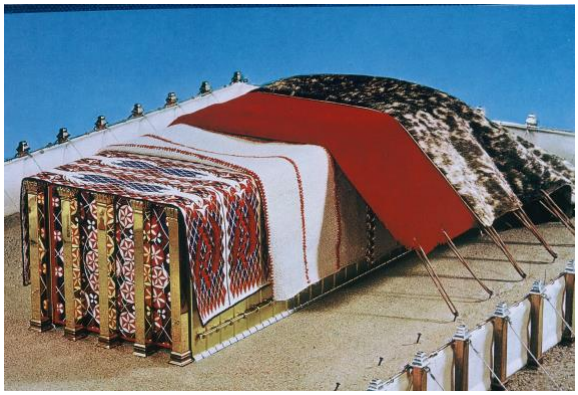
20180402 Exodus 35:1 "Walking from the Torah into Being the Church: Part One"



"Walking from the Torah into Being the Church: Part One" Series: "Lessons for Living: A Christian Walk through the Torah" by Faber McMullen, Union Grove Baptist Church ©2017-2018

2 Portion Summaries - Vayakhel (23) and Pekudei (24) (Exodus 35:1-

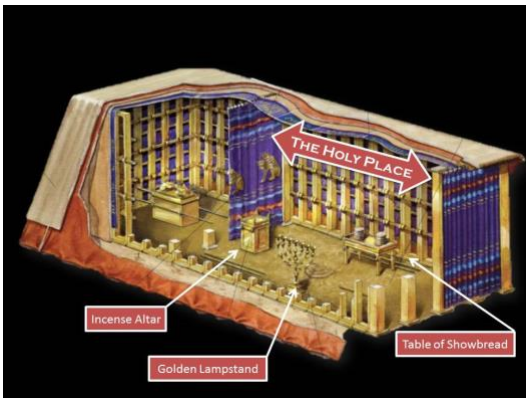
We will take the last two portions of the Torah for the year, out of order. We will look first at number twenty-four first and then twenty-three. Twenty-four discusses the contributions made by the assembly of Israel to the making of the tabernacle. This gives us great insight into our own attitudes about giving and about the nature of giving itself.



24 Pekudei

This is the last reading from the book of Exodus. It is called *Pekudei* (פקודי), meaning "Accounts." This portion details an audit of the contributions of the assembly of Israel to the making of the Tabernacle. The portion then describes the completion of the Tabernacle and concludes with a description of the glory of the LORD entering it.

Preparations for Making the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:4)



4 And Moses spoke to all the congregation of
the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the
thing which the LORD commanded, saying:
5 'Take from among you an offering to the
LORD. Whoever *is* of a willing heart, let him
bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold,
silver, and bronze; 6 blue, purple, and scarlet
thread, fine linen, and goats' *hair;* 7 ram skins
dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 8 oil
for the light, and spices for the anointing oil
and for the sweet incense; 9 onyx stones, and
stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. (Exodus 35:4-9 NKJV).

If you have been here at Union Grove for some time you are familiar with the Hebrew word *Avodah*. *Avodah* is a Hebrew word meaning work, service, and worship. You see God sees and desires for each of us a unity of our work, our worship, and our service. When we are doing what He desires for us to do, that which we call work and service are in fact worship and vice-versa. In the 1600's a French monk named brother

Lawrence wrote a book called "Practicing the Presence of God". The premise of the book is that if we are walking in the Spirit and doing what God desires for our lives, He is there with us. It transforms the way we cut the grass, wash the dishes, drive to work, or even what we do here in and for this assembly called Union Grove Baptist Church. This is not a sermon on "giving" so much as it is a sermon on "being".

This whole concept of *avodah* should impact directly and powerfully our own "offerings in the sanctuary". What is it that we are to give? What should be our heart attitude when we give? How can that act become holy worship before the Lord. *Avodah* giving involves our whole. It involves the giving of our time, our talents, and our treasure. All three are central to *avodah*. This Torah portion shows us that our giving is part and parcel of our worship. It is an integral part of our service. It is our work. When we sense God's presence and understand that He is here. He is there. He is with you in our rising up and in your lying down. It truly affects our behavior.

The items listed in verses 4-9 were precious and costly. The list begins with gold and works its way through silver, bronze, blue and purple thread, and a whole list of precious items to be used in the making of the tabernacle. God is telling us when we get on board and are walking in the Spirit, we should devote ourselves, our energies, and all that we have and are to His glory. Remember when the Purple Hulls were here the Lord showed us that we are to give our best to God. We are not commanded to be the best, but to give our best to Him.

Look at the first sentence again of this passage. "Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord" and then it is followed by a list of treasures of great value. Let me add that God may not have given you great worldly wealth and riches but he has given each of us a measure of time, talent, and treasure. Pray this morning that you would begin to be sanctified in your giving. Whatever you are called to give make sure that it is a precious and costly offering. Let's move on now to verse twenty.

The Attitude Behind our Offerings

[20] And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses.
[21] Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing,
and they brought the LORD's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its
service, and for the holy garments. [22] They came, both men and women, as many as had a
willing heart, *and* brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of
gold, that is, every man who *made* an offering of gold to the LORD. (Exodus 35:20-22
NKJV).

I think it's important for us to remember that the measure of our offering is not the size of our offering, but the heart attitude behind our offerings. The text clearly tells us that "everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all of its service, and for holy garments."

We should each do an inventory of our time, our talents, and our treasure, and ask God to help us truly understand that He is the author and owner of not just ten percent of all of that, but one hundred percent of all that we are and all that we have. I am not preaching this passage to somehow guilt you into giving more. I am preaching this passage because I believe God desires for each of us to enter into a better understanding of how He has blessed us and how He desires for us to enter into worship. We are often stingy and selfish in our giving. God has given us each a tabernacle here under these trees. What is your response to the care and concern for His tabernacle here? As I lay in my bed this Monday morning I asked the Lord to show me some of the ways we can worship Him and these came to mind:

Do you give God part of your time in maintaining His sanctuary at Union Grove? There are electrical plugs that don't work and carpets that need to be cleaned. There are doors that have never been fitted and locks that have been purchased but never been installed. There are ceiling lights that have been purchased, but there is no one with the time to install them. There are windows that have never been cleaned since the 1950's. There are old bulletins left in the sanctuary each week and dirty cups and half empty bottles left in Sunday School rooms each week. There are simple necessary items like toilet paper, coffee, paper cups, etc. that need to be replenished. Volunteers are needed who will be responsible for these items we use in our worship of the Lord in this holy place. I am not saying all these things to make anyone feel guilty. I am listing these so you might begin to see this as a holy place. You will routinely see me step over to the sink and see me washing a sink full of dirty coffee cups. Why do I do this? I'm doing this to lead by example.

Let's talk for a minute about setting aside a portion of your time, talent, and treasure to the Lord. How about sanctifying your Sunday mornings totally to God? We have teachers who prepare wonderful lessons, and often only one or two people come to hear what God has to say through them. This indifference may be an indicator of an anemic spiritual condition. I will ask you, what is the heart attitude behind the time, talents, and treasures that you bring to this body? Go back and look at verse 21 of the text. "Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting". I will ask you this morning, "is your heart so stirred and is your spirit is willing"? If not, sincerely ask God to make you aware of His holy presence, and to help you to respond accordingly. Turn with me now to verse thirty.

Specialized Talents - Bezalel and Oholiab

30 And Moses said to the children of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel
the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 and He has filled him with the
Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of
workmanship, 32 to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33 in
cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic
workmanship. (Exodus 35:30-33).

Isn't it incredible to think that God picked out artists by name. I've often expressed a desire to have our sanctuary decorated for the four seasons of the year. I would love to see banners with key scriptures that speak to our hearts up on the walls of this sanctuary. I have decided to begin praying that God would send artisans to make the things in this place that He has put into my heart. I have imagined alternate panels in this sanctuary being adorned with scripture on one panel and a seasonal theme on the next. If God doesn't send artisans then perhaps he'll send someone who will say, "Here pastor, take this offering and go find a business on the internet that can adorn this sanctuary".

4 Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each
from the work he was doing, 5 and they spoke to Moses, saying, “The people bring much
more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded *us* to do."
(Exodus 36:4-5 NKJV).

Pray with me that we would all use any specialized talents that we have in this place. I know that if some artisans desire to do this work to the glory of God in this place, that the rest of us would have our hearts so stirred that we would provide more than enough for that work to happen. Look what the text says, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded us to do." I feel like there is much that the Lord is commanding us to do here at Union Grove. I am not discouraged about it. I am absolutely thrilled by it. We are smack dab in the middle of seeing great things done in the Kingdom of God.

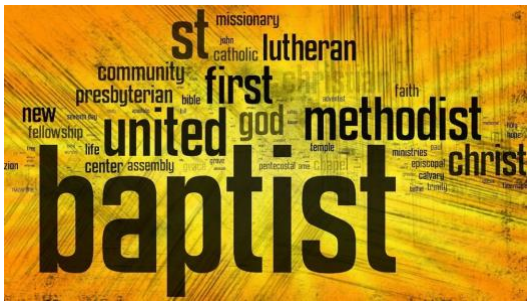
We have seen nine persons commit their lives in a precious baptismal service. Each person chose to do this to identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

23 *Vayakhel*

The twenty-second reading from the Torah and the second-to-last reading from the book of Exodus is called *Vayakhel* (ויקהל), which means "and he assembled." This portion from the Torah describes how the assembly of Israel worked together to build the Tabernacle. We will look closely at the term "assembly of Israel" and we'll look at how the meaning of that has much to do with being the church, and then we'll look at two primary mandates of Jesus to the church: 1) To be the salt of the earth, and 2) To be the light to the world. But before we get into the church we're going to look at the last portion of the year.

This Sunday we will leave our weekly study of the Torah. I am sure in the years to come we will come back again and again to the Torah and maybe we'll even go through it in another year as we have now done. What I want to do over the next two weeks is to make a natural transition from the Torah study to a study of the Church itself. We will begin our church study of the Book of Acts where we will look at the earliest days of the *Ekklesia* "The Called Out"; which translators ended up calling "the church". The Spanish speakers in the room are at a definite advantage because the word "Iglesia" is

As we move into the Book of Acts after Resurrection Sunday[1], I am not interested in giving a history lesson on the church. History lessons are sometimes interesting, but they are not life-changing. They do not carry the power of the Word of God being applied to a believer's life. I am interested in looking at scripture and examining exactly how it all began, and what does God want us to learn about how we continue on as the Body of Christ right here in the community of Whitehall, in the State of Texas, in the United States, and in the whole world. You all have listened to me again and again emphasizing that "The Church" is not this place here at Union Grove. So what is the church, and what should it be doing?



The Church is not an institution administered by men. It is not any institution such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church of America, or any other such institution. Members of those institutions may well be included as members of the one true Church, but they are not THE Church. THE Church is defined as all those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Messiah. Regardless of denomination, true orthodox Christians are those who have believed in Jesus' work on the cross as the sole substitution for their sins. Membership in no institution on earth will give you eternal life with God. It is about a relationship, not about an institution.

Great confusion has arisen by calling this assembly of people "the church". Why? Because the term "church" confuses our identity. It is not a good translation of either the Hebrew concept nor the Greek concept behind the term. I thought about all of this because of the first words from today's Torah portion, ***Vayakhel***, are "and he assembled". This put my mind on the word "assembly".

35 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, “These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do: (Exodus 35:1 NKJV).

Look for a moment at what I believe the Holy Spirit has showed me. I have never seen this anywhere and I may be off in it, but I find it very interesting.

35	Then	Moses	•	gathered	all	the congregation	of the children	
1	3	4	2	5	→	6	← →	7
וַ	מֹשֶׁה	אֶת	יַקְהֵל	כָּל		עֵדַת		בְּנֵי
וַ	מֹשֶׁה	אֵת 1	קהל	כֹּל		עֵדָה 1		בֵּן 1
w	mō·šĕ(h)	ʾēṯ 1	qhl	kōl		ʿē·ḏā(h) 1		bēn 1
C	NPMSA	PO	VcW3MS	NC-SC		NCFSC		NCMPC
	4872	853	6950	3605		5712		1121

[1] For many years I have avoided the term Easter as it is a pagan term named after the goddess of fertility, Astarte (Istar); from whence we derive the word "estrus". Hence, I usually refer to this season of Christian celebration as "Resurrection Sunday".

The verb used in this sentence is *kahal* (קהל) which means "to assemble", so *yaykhel* (ויקהל) means "and he assembled." The Torah usually refers to the all-encompassing community of the tribes of Israel as the *kahal* (the gathered). This word passed into the Greek Septuagint as *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία) literally meaning "the called out". This term refers to the assembly of Israel that worshipped in the Temple.

Israel Assembly or Congregation

Hebrew	Meaning	Greek Septuagint LXX	Old Testament English Bible	New Testament English Bible
קהל qâhâl	Congregation, Assembly	ἐκκλησίας (ekklesia) συναγωγὴν (sunagoge)	Congregation (86), Assembly (17), Company (17), Multitude (3)	Church, Synagogue
עדה 'êdâh	Assembly, Congregation	συναγωγὴν (sunagoge)	Assembly, Congregation	Synagogue (exclusively)

Ekklesia occurs 80 times in the canonical books of the Septuagint translation (LXX) of the Old Testament, and where the Hebrew original is available for comparison, it always translates ***qahal*** or words from the same root.

So who is it that is being assembled? The English translation above says "congregation". The Hebrew word is עֵדָה (edah). This word translated as "congregation" seems to be related to a three letter word in Hebrew which uses the same three letters and means "witnesses" or "testimonies". I believe that those who were gathered then are like those of us who are gathered today who are witnesses to what God has done in our lives. We share a testimony of what our lives would have been outside of His saving grace. <u>We the Church are the "called out witnesses".</u>

For some reason, when the King James translators translated the term *ekklesia* as "the church" they created a major disconnect from Israel's assemblies of old and set up this new concept and this odd term called "the church" that frankly doesn't even really appear in the Bible. Part of the harm of this translation is that English Bibles have led us to believe that "the church" is an institution or entity originating totally outside of Judaism and the Jewish people, and totally unrelated to the synagogue. This has caused us to give little heed to the Torah and its instruction for our lives. It has caused us to avoid the Torah in our preaching, and to disassociate with the foundations of our faith, and to avoid the lessons for living found in the Old Testament. It is like trying to be a good engineer without having any foundation in mathematics, or like trying to be a writer and without studying grammar, or being a doctor with little background in the study of biology. We as believers are in fact a continuation of those who are called together and we gather in this assembly as witnesses to what God has done in each of our lives. We stand firm on the promises of God and we share a common testimony as to His redemptive work in each of our lives.

Let's now look at these last two Torah portions in some detail and try to summarize what they might mean to Christians.

Sabbath Regulations

Exodus 35:1 gives detail and instruction as to Sabbath regulations. This reminds us that we are valuable as human beings whether we are working or not. We are commanded to take time for a Sabbath because it sets aside and consecrates a time for us to practice the presence of God. It allows us to "get real with God" entering into a

precious conversation with Him. We enter into Sabbath rest when we feast on His Word, when we practice His presence, and when we experience the sheer joy of knowing He has a plan, a purpose, and a place for each of us.

Making of the Ark of the Covenant

Turn with me now to Exodus 37:1 and let's look at the text.

37 Then Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *was* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. [2] He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it. [3] And he cast for it four rings of gold *to be set* in its four corners: two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it.....He made the cherubim at the two ends *of one piece* with the mercy seat. [9] The cherubim spread out *their* wings above, *and* covered the mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat. (Exodus 37:1-3,8-9 NKJV).

Remember the Ark of the Covenant was the only article in the tabernacle that required no service. It was there for one reason and one reason alone. It was the specific place on planet earth where the God who created the universe itself would present Himself to all of mankind. In that quiet place, that secret place, the *cohen*, the priest, would mediate between God and man. It is a perfect picture of grace because the priest stood there before it, listening to the Lord give direction and purpose to His people. The priest was to communicate this message to the people who had to only respond in obedience.

We will now break for intermission until next Sunday when we continue our wrap up of the Torah and its instruction for our lives as Christ's followers.

Invitation

- Exodus 37:10 | Making the Table for the Bread of the Presence
- Exodus 37:17 | Making the Lampstand
- Exodus 37:25 | Making the Altar of Incense
- Exodus 37:29 | Making the Anointing Oil and the Incense
- Exodus 38:1 | Making the Altar of Burnt Offering
- Exodus 38:9 | Making the Court of the Tabernacle
- Exodus 38:21 | Materials of the Tabernacle
- Exodus 39:1 | Making the Vestments for the Priesthood
- Exodus 39:32 | The Work Completed
- Exodus 40:1 | The Tabernacle Erected and Its Equipment Installed
- Exodus 40:34 | The Cloud and the Glory

Gathered means an assembly that is br

Invitation - Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Fryday - Webster, Texas.)

Preparations for Making the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:4)

4 And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, saying: 5 'Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze; 6 blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair;* 7 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 8 oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 9 onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. (Exodus 35:4-9 NKJV).

Giving of our time, talents, and treasure, is central to our *avodah*. It is part and parcel of the way we worship. It is an integral part of our service. It is our work. God is telling us when we get on board and are walking in the Spirit, we should devote ourselves, our energies, and all that we have and are to His glory. Remember when the Purple Hulls were here the Lord showed us that we are to give our best to God. We are not commanded to be the best, but to give our best to Him.

The Attitude Behind our Offerings

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many as had a willing heart, *and* brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who *made* an offering of gold to the LORD. (Exodus 35:20-22 NKJV).

I think it's important for us to remember that the measure of our offering is not the size of our offering, but the heart attitude behind our offerings. The text clearly tells us that "everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all of its service, and for holy garments."

We should each do an inventory of our time, our talents, and our treasure, and ask God to help us truly understand that He is the author and owner of not just ten percent of all of that, but one hundred percent of all that we are and all that we have. Here are some of the things that came into my mind about giving.

1 Can you give God part of your time in maintaining His sanctuary at Union Grove? There are electrical plugs that don't work and carpets that need to be cleaned. You will routinely see me step over to the sink and see me washing a sink full of dirty coffee cups. Why do I do this? I'm doing this to lead by example. When is the last time you stepped up to the sink and cleaned your church family's dirty dishes. Maybe you can come in and help Tim Levy with this facility.

2 How about sanctifying your Sunday mornings totally to God. We have teachers who prepare wonderful lessons, and often only one or two people come to hear what God has to say through them. I will ask you, what is the heart attitude behind the time, talents, and treasures that you bring to this body? Is your heart so stirred that your spirit is willing?

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